

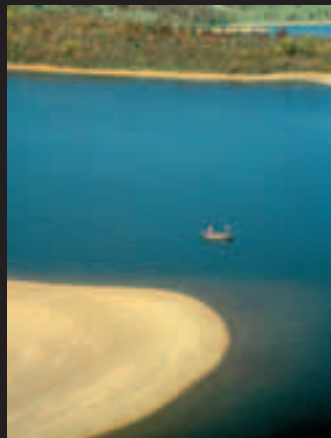
Turning Ideas Into Success Stories

An Economic Resource Profile



Reading

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Occupational Health Services



Regional Heart Center



Surgicenter



KidsCare at the Dispensary



The Rehabilitation Center



Spencer-Palmer Behavioral Health



Penn State Berks-Lehigh Valley College

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AmericanImages

P U B L I S H I N G

Produced and Published by
American Images Publishing
 1-800-807-6555
www.americanimages.org

Publisher **David J. Wayman**
 Sales Manager **Mary Jane Hamilton**
 Editor **Jane N. Levesque**
 Research & Writing **Ann-Margaret Lambo**
 Design & Production **Janet Coyne**
Janet Coyne Advertising Design

Cover photography courtesy of:
The Reading Hospital and Medical Center
Sovereign Performing Arts Center
(Blue Marsh Lake/Pagoda)
The Reading & Berks County Visitors Bureau

Background photo (this page) courtesy of:
The Reading & Berks County Visitors Bureau

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Reading

Greetings

from the Mayor's Office at Reading City Hall!

Blessed with a location that offers all the charm of a small town but convenient access to Philadelphia, New York, Washington, D.C. and other major East Coast areas, Reading is the ideal place to plan your business future.

Reading's expanded Keystone Opportunity Zones offer significant tax abatement as extra incentive to make a business investment in Reading. It offers a rejuvenated downtown atmosphere, spurred by the success of the Sovereign Center convention facility in the heart of downtown.

Situated ideally in the center of the growing county of Berks, Reading is committed to fostering a healthy business climate through an assortment of programs offered by its Community Development Department.

Reading has a large work force from which to draw and a very affordable cost of living. More than just a name on the Monopoly board, Reading offers a bright future to go along with a glorious past.

Take a ride on the Reading and come see all that we have to offer.

Sincerely,

The City of Reading

Reading, Pa.: An Economic Resource Profile
Sponsored by: Reading, Pa.



*Facts at a Glance***GOVERNMENT**

Elected full-time mayor
City managing director
Seven elected city council members

POPULATION

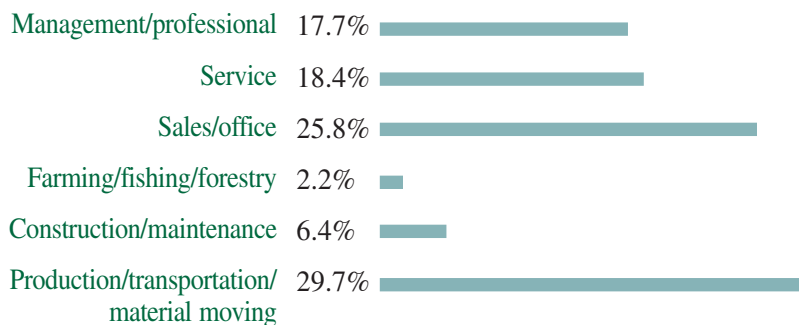
81,207 (2000 Census)

DEMOGRAPHICS

2000 Median Household Income – \$27,902

HOUSING

Households – 34,314 (2000 Census)
Owner occupied – 15,356
Renter occupied – 14,758
Vacant – 4,200

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY**CLIMATE***Normal Temperatures (F)*

	Maximum	Minimum
January	39°	25.5°
July	85.5°	69.7°

Snowfall	January	6.1"
	Annual	20.5"

Precipitation	July	4.39"
	Annual	42.05"

Source: NOAA

DISTANCE TO MAJOR CITIES

Philadelphia – 56 miles
Baltimore, Md./
Washington, D.C. – 97 miles
New York City, N.Y. – 125 miles



The Reading Hospital
and Medical Center

Overview

*The city of Reading is a
community with small-town
qualities & big-city opportunities.
From its economic development
programs to the area's cultural
& recreational activities,
Reading is a place for turning
ideas into success stories.*

Reading's history dates back to the 1730s. From its position on the Schuylkill River, Reading was poised to grow right along with other cities in the young commonwealth.

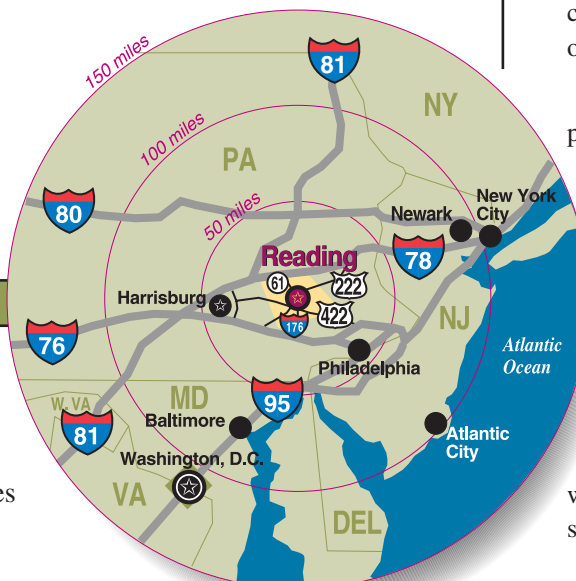
And grow it did. Over several decades, Reading grew into a railroad and manufacturing powerhouse. Among the other major industries that flourished in the area, Reading also came to be known as a leader in the production of shoes, boots and hats.

Today, the Schuylkill River and the railroad continue to be important facets of Reading. As the first Outlet Capital of the World, Reading still relies on the clothing industry as a major contributor to the local economy. Downtown Reading continues to be the pulse of the area, with wonderful shopping, cultural and historic entertainment opportunities.



And yet, as it has done in the past, Reading continues to grow and evolve. The city has been careful to preserve its past; three historic districts are within the city limits. At the same time, Reading's leaders continue to look toward the future, creating and implementing new programs to keep Reading vibrant and exciting.

Reading, a work in progress, where turning ideas into success stories is part of the business plan.



Success Stories

The best way to gauge Reading's economic development climate is to look to its accomplishments. From one corner of the city to the next, business & industry are turning ideas into success stories, one idea at a time.

Our City Reading Program

purchases vacant houses within the city limits, rehabilitates them and turns them into community assets. The program breathes life back into the house, and in doing so, it generates tax dollars for the city.

The program is considered one of the city's success stories because 40 homes already have been rehabilitated and sold. Another 50 are under construction, while seven are in a rent-to-own program. The program has had some trickle-down effects as well. When Our City Reading spruces up a house, many of the neighbors improve their own homes.

Uni-Chains Manufacturing Inc.

is another Reading success story. A subsidiary of A/S of Denmark, Uni-Chains designs and manufactures conveyor chains and modular plastic belting and conveyor accessories. When the company first located in the Reading area, a new factory was built near the Reading Regional Airport. Less than 10 years later, thanks to continued sales and growth, Uni-Chains had outgrown that facility.

Company executives could have moved their operations but they chose to stay in Reading for a number of reasons. Most importantly, they wanted to retain their key employees, who live in the Reading area. In addition, Uni-Chains was able to acquire a suitable lot in Reading's Keystone Opportunity Zone (KOZ). Not only could they

build a bigger facility, they also could take advantage of the tax benefits associated with operating in a KOZ.

With cooperation from the Greater Berks Development Fund and the city of Reading, Uni-Chains was able to build a new facility.

Brentwood Industries Inc. is another Reading-based business that has created success stories from ideas. The first business to locate in Reading's KOZ, Brentwood –



a manufacturer of high integrity plastics – stayed in Reading for the same reasons as Uni-Chains. In addition to its loyal, dedicated and stable work force, Brentwood remained in Reading because of the city's and the commonwealth's financial incentives.

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The Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development has recognized Brentwood as a state success story on its Web site at www.inventpa.com.

Buttonwood Gateway Redevelopment Area is a Reading success story in progress. Part of Reading's comprehensive economic development plan, the Buttonwood Gateway Redevelopment Area is located in a state-designated KOZ. Over the course of the project, the city of Reading will use \$2.45 million in state funding and another \$5.9 million in federal funding to acquire a 12-acre portion of the site, which will then undergo environmental cleanup and development. The city expects the project to create at least 160 jobs for area residents and to leverage \$1.75 million in private financing.

Reading PENNSYLVANIA

Economic Development Resources

Reading has a variety of economic development organizations & programs staffed by committed professionals who believe an individual company's success is their success.

■ **The Community and Economic Development Department** of the city of Reading administers about \$4 million a year in Community Development Block Grant funds for various projects within the city limits. In the past, money has been used to install new sidewalks in the city, purchase fire trucks, build playgrounds and fund the Sovereign Center project.

A portion of the block grant funds also fueled many of the city's

economic development projects including American Chain and Cable and the Morgantown Road Site. In both cases, the organizations were given incentives – in the form of infrastructure improvements and land clearing – to come to Reading.

■ The **City of Reading Keystone Opportunity Zone**, a 500-acre plot of land strategically located near the Norfolk Southern rail line, permits businesses within the city boundaries to receive a tax exemption on practically all state and local taxes for up to 12 years.

■ **The Buttonwood Gateway Redevelopment Area** is about 25 acres of brownfields located adjacent to the Buttonwood Street Bridge. In the last several years, the city of Reading has committed itself to redeveloping this area by acquiring abandoned buildings and readying the land for infrastructure. More than \$8 million in state and federal funds has been used to convert the once-barren brownfields to sites for business and industry.

■ **The City of Reading Façade Improvement Program** is designed to provide those who own commercial property in the city's downtown economic revitalization area an incentive to improve the facades of their buildings. The program encourages property owners or tenants to create a refreshing and unique appearance while maintaining consistency in signage, scale and character.

■ **The Centre Park Historic District Residential Façade Improvement Program** is another way the city is working to preserve its rich past. This façade improvement program provides incentives to owners of residential properties in the Centre Park Historic District to

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rehabilitate their buildings. The residential façade improvement program provides funds to make repairs and alterations to a building while preserving portions or features which are architecturally or historically significant.

In addition to the façade programs, the city of Reading also offers a **tax abatement program**. Based on new property assessments on a residential structure where improvements have been made, Reading's tax abatement program abates the newly assessed taxes on a structure 100 percent in the first year, 80 percent in the second year and so on through the fifth year after the improvements. This program also applies to those who build new homes within the city limits.

■ The **Greater Berks Development Fund (GBDF)** is a community development fund involving money from the public and private sector. The organization's mission is to guide businesses and organizations through relocation, financing and other business barriers. In addition to maintaining an inventory of available commercial and industrial space, the fund also arranges for low-interest loans, tax credits and development assistance programs for those businesses that qualify.

The GBDF offers a variety of financing programs including the Pennsylvania Industrial Development Authority, the Small Business First Fund, Machinery and Equipment Loan Fund, the Pennsylvania Economic Development Financing Authority, the Small Business Administration 504 Program and Penn SE Mezzanine Fund.

■ Kutztown University is just as committed to the business community as it is to the student community. Through its **Small Business Development Center, (KUSBDC)**, the university's full-time staff of professionals offers services that include the resources of the university and the nationwide network of the SBDCs.

Entrepreneurs can access the many programs offered by KUSBDC, such as the Business Assistance Program or other specialized programs like Government Procurement and International Trade.

Many of Reading's business success stories involved the SBDC

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at Kutztown. Businesses started with the assistance of the SBDC survive longer than other businesses and grow five times faster than the average firm. Seventy-three percent of businesses started in 1992 with the help of the SBDC were still doing business five years later.

■ Kutztown University is also host to the **Entrepreneur's Resource Center**, or **EDGE**. Based on community support and participation, the EDGE Center offers technical assistance by pairing the university's honors seniors and MBA students with organizations in the business community. These students work with entrepreneurs by providing assistance to start-up companies, conducting special projects for expanding

businesses, assisting with the development of community projects and conducting research for companies interested in international trade.

EDGE Center students also administer the 20-week MINDCO Entrepreneurial

Education Program, which targets women and minority entrepreneurs.



◀
**Penn
Street**

*Courtesy of the
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■ **Community & Economic Development Department City of Reading**

815 Washington St.
Room 3-06
Reading, PA 19601-3690
610-655-6211
610-655-6526 Fax

■ **Greater Berks Development Fund**

P.O. Box 8621
Reading, PA 19603-8621
610-376-6739
610-478-9553 Fax
www.readingpa.com

■ **The Façade Improvement Program**

Community Development Department
Room 3-03
City Hall
815 Washington St.
Reading, PA 19601-3690
610-655-6414 or 610-655-6211
610-373-2858 Fax
610-655-6442 TDD

■ **Kutztown University Small Business Development Center Entrepreneur's Resource Center (EDGE)**

999 Berkshire
Wyomissing Center
Suite 110
Wyomissing, PA 19610
610-683-4706
www.kutztownsbdc.org

■ **Pennsylvania Department of Community & Economic Development North East Regional Office**

4184 Dorney Park Road
Suite 101
Allentown, PA 18104
610-530-5718
610-530-5596 Fax
www.inventpa.com

Transportation

Reading has a great location in Pennsylvania that makes just about any destination an easy trip.

Just 55 miles northwest of Philadelphia's Center City, Reading is less than a two-and-a-half-hour drive from Washington, D.C., Baltimore, Md., and New York City, N.Y.

Reading's highway system – including Interstate 78, the Pennsylvania Turnpike and Routes 222 and 422 – keeps business and industry on the move in a timely, cost-effective fashion. The turnpike is only 11 miles south of the city limits and I-78 is just 15 miles north. Routes 222 and 422 are great connectors to other major highways that lead to this nation's major markets.

Berks Area Reading Transportation Authority (BARTA) moves people within the county via natural gas-powered buses. With a new transportation center located in downtown Reading, BARTA now has a central transfer point for most bus routes and an automated bus arrival and departure system.

The city of Reading is planning for its transportation future with the **Schuylkill Valley Metro** project. Supported by the Schuylkill Valley Metro Coalition, the 62-mile rail line will run along the Route 422 corridor from Wyomissing to Philadelphia. Not only will the completed rail line reduce traffic congestion, it also will spur economic growth in the Route 422 area, create jobs and preserve the environment. The project is still in the planning stages but is to be completed after 2010.

Norfolk Southern Railway Co. is the major freight railroad providing access to a national network.

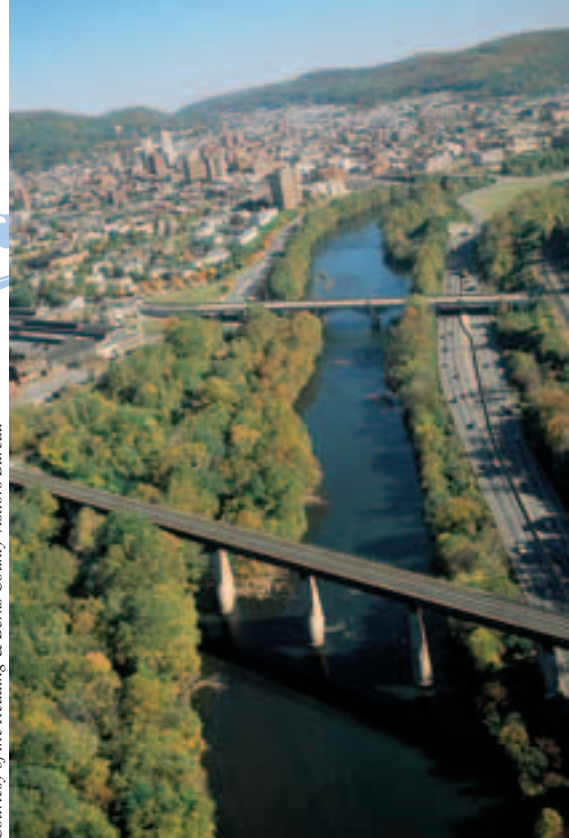


The company operates nearly 21,500 route miles in 22 eastern states.

Organizations that need to take to the skies will find it an easy task, thanks to the **Reading Regional Airport (RRA)**. Located on state Route 183 northwest of Reading, RRA is a full-service transportation center with daily service to major hubs throughout the country, making air travel convenient and cost effective.

The Philadelphia International Airport (PHL) is close enough to meet the needs of those companies requiring international travel.

Courtesy of the Reading & Berks County Visitors Bureau



△ Schuylkill River

The airport is located just one hour away from Reading.

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Major Employers In Berks County (2002)

Organization	# of Employees
Reading Hospital and Medical Center	3,833
East Penn Manufacturing Co.	3,767
Berks County Government	2,676
Carpenter Technology Corp.	2,535
Boscov's Department Store	2,254
Pennsylvania Government	1,908
Reading School District	1,864
Agere Systems	1,546
First Energy	1,533
St. Joseph Medical Center	1,386
First Union National Bank/Wachovia	1,302
Wal-Mart	1,234
United States Government	1,200
Associated Wholesalers Inc.	1,183
Redner's Inc.	1,174
Sovereign Bancorp Inc.	1,163
Penske Truck Leasing	1,070
Baldwin Hardware Corp.	1,002
Kutztown University	929
R.M. Palmer Co.	925

Reading

PENNSYLVANIA

Lifestyles

Whether it's shopping, sports, the symphony or sightseeing, the city of Reading & Berks County have great entertainment options. From its famed outlet malls to the many historical sites that pepper the area, Reading can satisfy many different recreational tastes.

Visitors to Reading don't want to miss the **Pagoda** at the top of Mount Penn. Built in the early 1900s, the Pagoda is a cattle castle-style building reminiscent of the Shogun Dynasty of Japan. The seven-story Pagoda is home to the Berks Arts Council.

The **William Penn Memorial Fire Tower**, located atop Mount Penn not far from the Pagoda, was built in 1939 as a fire observation tower and tourist attraction. There is a 60-mile panoramic view from the top of the tower, which is constructed entirely of fireproof material.

The Reading Public Museum



Courtesy of the Reading & Berks County Visitors Bureau

The Reading Public Museum

has a permanent collection that is representative of the people and places of the world. The institution's fine art collection includes more than 700 oil paintings from various artists, and the natural history collection includes 25,000 mineral specimens and 30,000 anthropological and historical objects.

Reading is home to three historic districts within the city limits: **Centre Park**, **Callowhill** and **Prince**. Situated

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in the northwestern part of Reading, the Centre Park Historic District, Reading's first suburb, is almost entirely residential. The homes, which date back to 1895, feature a wide variety of architectural styles – including Victorian and early 20th Century mansions – that are examples of some of the highest craftsmanship of the day. Compact row homes that exemplify Late Queen Anne, Reading-German and Late Federal Styles can be found along some of the streets.

In addition to residences, the Centre Park and Callowhill historic districts feature landmarks such as neighborhood churches and a Civil War monument.

About three-fourths of the buildings in the Prince Historic District were built between 1850 and 1890. The district contains more than 800 historic sites, such as homes, churches, factories and commercial buildings.

The majestic **Sovereign Performing Arts Center**, formerly Reading's historic Rajah Theater, underwent renovations totaling \$7 million to restore it to its turn-of-the-century splendor. It hosts The Nutcracker Ballet, special concerts, Broadway musicals and regular performances by **The Reading Symphony Orchestra**.

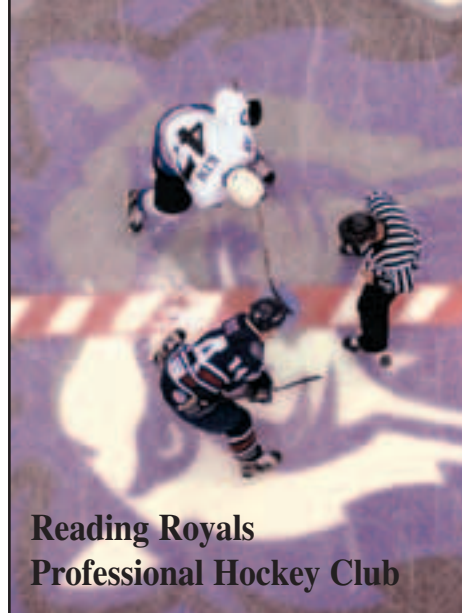
Fans of farm club baseball will want to see the **Reading Phillies**. A Double-A affiliate of the Philadelphia Phillies and a member of the Eastern League of Professional Baseball, the Reading club has been playing ball in Reading for 37 years.

For those who prefer watching athletes glide on the ice, a **Reading Royals** game is a must-see. An affiliate of the National Hockey League's Los Angeles Kings and the American Hockey League's Manchester Monarchs, the Royals call Reading's new **Sovereign Center** home. The Reading Royals are also members of the East Coast Hockey League.

The new Sovereign Center hosts other major events, including rock concerts and ice skating shows.

Reading has great outdoor recreation options as well, such as parks that include picnic areas, playgrounds and walking paths. In addition, the Appalachian Trail winds its way through the county. Reading's multi-use Union Canal Towpath and Thun Trail, both of which are more than four miles in length, provide a place to jog, walk or bike.

Known as the Original Outlet Capital of the World, the city is a mecca for recreational shoppers and hard-core bargain hunters. Millions of people visit the outlets each year. Deep savings can be found at designer and top-name outlet stores, and there



Purdon House of Photography

is no tax on clothing or shoes.

Venture outside of Reading's city limits, and there is even more to do and see in Berks County. Visitors can explore the **Daniel Boone Homestead**, the **Historical Society of**

Berks County, the **Berks County Heritage Center** and the **Boyertown Museum of Historic Vehicles**.

For a taste of the outdoors, take a picnic lunch to **Blue Marsh Lake** in Leesport. While there, take the time to hike, bike or horseback ride on the park's 30-mile trails or go swimming or boating.



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How Can the City of Reading Help You Turn Your Ideas Into Success Stories?

The Right Mix!

Helping businesses succeed and improving the quality of life in our community is our primary goal. A thriving commercial center attracts business, attracts jobs and attracts good people!

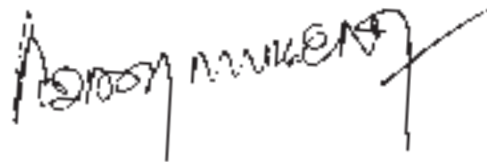
In order to create that kind of atmosphere, you have to have the right mix of ingredients and we do!

The City of Reading has small-town charm, but it is located only 56 miles from the 4th largest city in the country, Philadelphia. We are less than 100 miles from Baltimore-Washington and only 125 miles from the Big Apple. Businesses and individuals find our **location** a key advantage.

Our **transportation** infrastructure connects us to some of the largest markets in the United States, giving our businesses a distinct advantage. Whether by highway, air or rail you can get it there from here quickly and efficiently.

Reading has a friendly, welcoming **quality of life** that people find downright attractive.

Whether you are planning to relocate, expand or create a new business, talk to us first. We have the right mix of amenities and benefits that can help you turn your ideas into success stories.



Adam Mukerji, Director
Community & Economic Development Department
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